

they want to get in on it, even though that was such a bad idea, as Bill Clinton and as the Congressional Budget Office have said, in response to Dr. Frist's request back in 2004, that allowing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate prices would not save any money. The program is working so well.

Every one of these bills that have been brought up this week under this special rule of no rule, no opportunity to meet in the Rules Committee and no amendments, all these issues, minimum wage and completing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission and stem cell expansion, poll really high. Yet this particular issue is just the reverse of the information they have got. It is an 80 percent positive issue for us. So I can only presume that they still want a little skin in the game. They want to get on the bandwagon.

Well, I am going to tell you, what is going to happen is our seniors are going to get skinned because they are about to ruin a good program. A program that is working well, that 80 percent of our seniors are in favor of. It has brought down prices of prescription drugs. It has come in now at \$22 a month average monthly premium and this is great satisfaction. And they want to try to improve on that by letting the government negotiate prices. It is going to be a disaster for them. And I hope some of their Members, if they are smart, from these districts that they won from our Members in these elections in November, in these marginal districts, they had better talk to their folks back home before they follow the lead of their leadership and vote for this atrocious piece of legislation.

I railed at the outset, Mr. Speaker, about the fact that the new minority has been given no opportunity for amendments on any of these first four bills that are brought up during their 100 hours, and I do think it is an atrocity. But they may be doing us a favor inadvertently by not allowing us to amend this piece of legislation, which can't be amended. It needs to be killed. We need to kill this sucker dead. And I think every Member on our side of the aisle will vote against it, and the smart ones on their side of the aisle will vote against it.

□ 1900

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERLMUTTER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

VOTING RIGHTS FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have initiated this Special Order on behalf of the people of the District of Columbia who are second per capita in the Federal taxes they pay to support our Federal Government; yes, including this House and Senate and all the Armed Forces and our exquisite government throughout the United States, and who have fought and died in every war since the establishment of the Republic. In their name, I come forward.

I came forward Tuesday in a 5-minute Special Order simply to inform the House that I had just filed my vote, my bill, that is to say, refiled the bill that Representative TOM DAVIS and I had filed and hoped to pass in the 109th Congress, the Fair and Equal D.C. House Voting Rights Act. I came in gratitude to my own party. I came also in some frustration. It is impossible to hide that frustration.

I represent people who have been frustrated for 200 years and don't want one single moment more of frustration by having a second-class Member of the House of Representatives while paying first-class taxes and dying and fighting in every war that our country has ever fought, including this war where lives continue to be lost in such large numbers and for what cause. They do not ask, they simply fight like other Americans.

I had hoped to be able to vote on the very bills that have been in discussion here this week, particularly the bills on which Democrats ran and perhaps were responsible for our capture of the House. And my deepest regret was that my Committee of the Whole vote that was taken from me when the Democrats came to power was not automatically put back into the rules.

To his great credit, the majority leader indicates that he intends to introduce a provision to that effect. And I know I speak for myself and all of the delegates when I thank him about thinking about us and about how deeply we feel about that vote. For myself, I have come to the floor to say that I have had to pass that vote. I won't get to vote on the six items. I have been pleased to be able to speak on them as usual.

I am at this point moving forward to where I have been instructed by the people of the United States. They don't even want the Committee of the Whole vote confused with what they are entitled to, and that is the full House vote.

Mr. Speaker, before I go further, I have a number of people I must thank. The bill I introduced today was not a bill that I authored. It was originated by my good friend who also lives in the region, Representative TOM DAVIS of Virginia, who has grown up in the region and has seen the District of Columbia without a vote and believed

that at least a vote on the House floor was virtually mandated by any Congress controlled by either party. He was in the majority and he initiated this idea because it came to his attention that the most Republican State in the Union had missed getting full voting rights, were chafing at that because they believed they were entitled and they had gone all the way to the Supreme Court to get them, and believed that this provided out what turns out to be the case, probably the only opportunity the District of Columbia will have to get its full voting rights in a very long time.

I want to thank the majority leader who lives in the region who has been one of the most steadfast proponents of D.C. voting rights and never gives up and who always stands with us and to whom we will be eternally grateful.

I have special thanks to HENRY WAXMAN, the Chair of the Government Reform Committee, who has been the Democratic leader of the bill that I bring forward today for all 4 years which we have worked on it. He is always a strong supporter of District home rule and for District of Columbia voting rights. He was here years before I came to Congress, and I am second only to him in supporting these issues. He is one of the great problem-solvers of the Congress, and he has been instrumental in bringing this bill forward. It is impossible to believe it could have happened without HENRY WAXMAN.

I want to thank the Democratic and Republican members of the Government Reform Committee, who in the 109th Congress literally gave us virtually a tie vote of Republicans and Democrats favoring this bill: 15 Democrats, 14 Republicans.

I want to thank Representative JOHN CONYERS, a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus, the dean of the caucus, who has carried this idea again long before I ever thought of coming to Congress.

At the same time, I want to thank my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus who since the founding days of the caucus have given D.C. voting rights a priority, who believe with me that it is an issue of discrimination based on race, and for that matter on location. I say that and will explain it later because of the origins of our voteless condition.

I want to thank Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, who with many other Democratic Senators in the Congress have carried my bill for full voting rights for the residents of the District of Columbia, the No Taxation Without Representation Act. We have reluctantly but with great realism embraced the House-only act because we understand the spirit of the Congress, that it has virtually never acted all at once to do what it is supposed to do. So we know that we have to proceed in an incremental fashion.

I must thank my good colleagues from the State of Utah who have